



POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 4, 2023 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Manchester Police Department
405 Valley Street
Manchester, NH 03103

The Regular Monthly Meeting was held at the Manchester Police Department Community Room on October 4, 2023, at 9:00am, attended by:

Commissioners: Gene Brown, Eva Castillo, Manny Content, John Cronin and John Mercier

Police Department Staff: Chief Allen Aldenberg, Assistant Chief Peter Marr, Captain Sean Leighton, Captain Shawn McCabe, Captain Kenneth Loui, Captain Matthew Larochelle, Captain John Cunningham, Captain, Brandon Murphy, Emily Cleary (Crime Analyst), Diane Kingsbury (Admin. Assist.)

Others attending the Public Session: Manchester business owner and blogger Jeff Hastings

1. COMMISSION CHAIRMAN OPENING COMMENTS

- Commissioner Cronin opened the meeting at 9:00am, welcoming all those present.

2. NOTICES POSTED / APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- The Commission confirmed with Diane Kingsbury that the notices had been posted at the City Library as well as on the MPD's website homepage, event calendar, and via social media.
- Commissioners present unanimously voted to approve the minutes from the 9/6/23 meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Cronin explained that each Manchester resident wishing to speak shall state his/her name and address, each will have only one opportunity to speak, and will be limited to three minutes in which to address comments on a particular subject to the Commission.

No Public Comments

4. DIVISIONAL REPORTS

Investigative Division – Captain McCabe

- The division continues to be very busy. For the month of September, General Detectives have completed 49 arrest warrants and 18 search warrants.
- Officers Newell and Peters continue to do a great job in their career development assignments in detectives.
- Officers Capelle-Simone and Romano started in career development last week.
- Detective Pittman was awarded Officer of the Month for July.
- Detective Lamy was awarded Officer of the Month for August.
- Detectives Blonigen and Burchill have been doing well and have adjusted into their new roles as SRO's.
- Officer Vitale continues to do well in career development in the Juvenile Unit.
- Officer Gross, who was in career development in the Juvenile Unit has decided at this time that she is unable to commit to the hours and stepped down in that role.
- We are working with the Manchester School District to make sure the Mirror project gets started back up again with 8th grade students.
- Detectives Choi, Pelletier, Hill and Officer Vitale continue career development in Cyber Crime.
- Officer Campbell continues his career development in the DV Unit.
- The Juvenile and DV Units have completed 29 arrest warrants and 17 search warrants.
- Cyber Crime completed 21 search warrants
- Total warrants for all units within the Investigative Division – 78 arrest warrants and 56 search warrants.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Commissioner Content asked for clarification on the search warrants specific to juveniles and was advised that the warrants were for cases involving juveniles.

Community Affairs Division – Captain Larochelle

- The Senior Walks began on September 11th. The first one kicked off from Fisher Cats stadium and others so far have been at Rockingham Rail Trail and Livingston Park.
- The Citizens Police Academy began on Wednesday, 9/13 with approximately 14 participants. Tonight's session will cover Cyber Crime, ICAC and Juvenile.
- The Fall session of our Cops & Kids events at city schools will be starting up again in about one week.
- The DEA Drug Take Back event is scheduled for October 28th.
- Community Policing night at McDonalds is taking place tonight, October 4th.
- City wide Trick or Treat will be Tuesday, October 31st.
- The Mounted Unit recently returned from Ottawa, Canada where they spent 2 weeks with the RCMP. They received very good training with other riders from across Canada and worldwide.

- The recent Footrace for the Fallen raised a significant amount of money for MPAL.
- Several events coming up this month with faith based organizations for Faith and Blue week.
- Traffic is working on plans for upcoming events; 10/7 Oktoberfest 5K at Backyard Brewery and the Manchester Marathon on 11/12.
- Traffic is also working on several motor vehicle accidents including a recent fatal accident involving a motorcycle and pickup truck on Weston Road.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Commissioner Content asked if there have been any issues since Trick or Treat has been changed to night time hours. Chief Aldenberg advised that 4 additional cars are added for the Halloween patrol and cruisers pass out candy and light sticks.
- Commissioner Castillo asked what the purpose of Faith in Blue is and was advised that it is designed to build relationships and bonds between police and churches.

Legal and Professional Standards Division – Captain Loui

- Training and Recruitment continues its efforts to fill our vacancies and has now added the testing and vetting of dispatcher candidates to its role.
- With regard to our sworn vacancies, we currently have a total of 9 non-certified applicants and 2 certified applicants (from Epping, NH and Idaho) at various stages of the hiring process.
- The anticipated hire date for non-certified applicants who make it through the process is December 4th of this year and they will attend the 195th Police Academy class. That academy starts on January 8th with an anticipated graduation date of April 26th.
- We currently have one recruit attending the 194th Police Academy class who is expected to graduate next month.
- Our three recruits who were in the 193rd Police Academy graduated last Friday. One of those recruits, Jacklyn Gaumer, brought home the Arthur D. Kehas Outstanding Achiever Award, which is considered the Academy's most prestigious award. It is presented to the graduating recruit who has reached the highest levels of achievement in academics, physical training and firearms, exhibiting the highest degrees of leadership and motivation. Congratulations to Officer Gaumer!
- With regard to our six dispatcher vacancies, Training & Recruitment has 10 candidates in various stages of the hiring process, with 15 more signed up for testing.
- Training and Recruitment is currently tasked with implementing the new AXON body cameras, digital evidence management system, and T-10 Tasers recently approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The purchased equipment arrived over the past two weeks. Training of our department instructors for this equipment commenced on Monday.
- Lastly, thanks to the efforts of Sergeant Dan Whelan and Supervisor Brian Blais, the staffing in Records has finally normalized. As of this past Monday, we are at full staffing with all services to the public restored.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Commissioner Content asked if the transition of the body cams will be done hard line or transitioned. Captain Loui advised that they will be phased in as we still have one year left on the old contract. Chief Aldenberg added that the 'train the trainer' will start in 2 days.

Administrative Division – Captain Leighton

- We are still down 6 dispatchers – we have 6 candidates in the process. We had a dispatch test last night and there is one scheduled for 10/8 with a good amount of applicants.
- As of 10/23, we will be down 2 Dispatch Supervisors, as one will be resigning and another will be moving to a crime analyst position. We have 2 internal and 3 external candidates for the position and will be starting the selection process very soon.
- We have 2 openings at the Front Counter and have 2 strong candidates being looked at now for that position.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Commissioner Cronin asked how long it typically takes for a dispatcher to be confident in the position and Captain Leighton advised that dispatching is a very difficult job which is not for everyone. After 6 months of training, dispatchers are released to a solo status but it can take up to a year or more for them to be confident in the position.

Special Enforcement Division – Captain Murphy

- Completing SWAT selection process. After scenario training conducted on October 3rd eleven candidates remain in the process and will move forward to oral boards on Friday.
- Six officers have been assigned to ACU career development (Officers Grant, Tyler, Martens, Levesque, Meghan, Sardo and Munnely)
- Special Investigations Unit continues efforts to disrupt the possession and sale of illegal drugs in the City of Manchester. Currently, the division is engaged in several investigations with state and federal partners

targeting mid and high level drug trafficking organizations. Many of these investigations require intensive efforts on the part of investigators, the support of multiple agencies and transcend state borders.

- The Anticrime Unit continues efforts to disrupt the illegal possession of firearms associated with gun violence. The unit has several active investigations with state and local partners and continues to make arrests associated with gun violence and other related violent crimes. The unit has made key arrests of wanted subjects and witnesses which have had a significant impact on trial outcomes. During this period, the unit facilitated the arrest of a subject wanted on criminal threatening (firearm) charges and the recovery of a stolen firearm.
- The Street Crime Unit continues to address the street level possession and distribution of illegal drugs as well as investigate numerous problem locations reported by the public. Unit members have also supported investigations into various wanted individuals, with a predominant focus on those wanted for violent offenses. Unit members also support the patrol division during in-progress violent crimes whenever possible. During this month, the unit arrested a source of supply level individual in the downtown area. Top Gun training school completed by Detectives Nocella and Bates.

Patrol Division – Captain Cunningham

- The current allotted Patrol compliment is 112, with 101 assigned and 89 available due to injuries, FMLA and military.
- Several officers are assigned to career development throughout the department.
- September calls for service: 4,461 reactive calls and 3,891 proactive calls.
- Two new officers have completed FTO and are now on their own.
- One certified officer is set to complete FTO any day.
- Four certified officers begin FTO on 10/15 and are anticipated to be on their own at the end of November.
- Three non-certified officers also begin FTO on 10/15 with an anticipated complete date at the end of December.
- Mobile Field Force equipment is staged and ready to be deployed if needed.
- K9 Unit has normal scheduled monthly trainings.
- K9 Unit had 38 deployments in September.
- Manchester is hosting the national USPCA tracking certification on 10/13.
- One team will complete USPCA drug detection certification on 10/20
- Officer Jake Sawtelle is our newest K9 Handler who will be working with K9 Rook. They will be attending a 12-week patrol Academy from 9/11 through 12/15 and the EOD Academy starting in January.
- Resignations: Officer Eric Smith resigned on 10/2 and Officer Zachary Brandt resigned on 9/19. Both are certified officers returning to their previous departments.
- A new Patrol Administrative Assistant will be starting on 10/16.
- A new translation app will be rolled out next week.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Commissioner Content was curious, out of the 8,000+ calls this month, what percentage were considered nuisance calls? Captain Cunningham and Chief Aldenberg both agreed that a large portion of that number is quality of life/nuisance calls. Manny suggested to let the public know that with such a high amount of nuisance calls, resources are being taken away from more critical calls requiring police response. Crime Analyst, Emily Cleary advised that there is an interactive data analytics program in the works where the public will be able to use the dashboard to access demographics and calls for service. The program will allow users to select dates, locations and crimes. Crimes will be updated every 24 hours and calls for service will update every 4 to 6 hours. We are hoping to have this in place for public use by the end of the year. Commissioner Mercier asked if the data will be historical and was advised by Ms. Cleary that the dates will go back 3 to 5 years.
- Commissioner Content also inquired out of the 38 K9 deployments, if most of the suspect's complied. Captain Cunningham explained that deployments involving searches where suspects are involved can end many different ways. However, recently, Officer Hennessy and K9 Kane assisted Hooksett where a suspect bailed out of a vehicle and ran into the woods. K9 Kane tracked the suspect through the wood line and then gave him a chance to surrender, which generally, in most cases results in compliance. K9 deployments can also be the result of scent detection, de-escalation and to assist Patrol and the Special Enforcement Division. Captain Cunningham advised that they are a great asset to the department and Captain Murphy added that they are a great less-lethal tool for the department.

5. COMMENTS FROM ASSISTANT CHIEF MARR

- We are having ongoing retention issues. We recently lost two certified officers who resigned to return to their previous departments. Through exit interviews it was learned that a big issue for these officers is the process used to force officers to work. Since the department has mandated patrol staffing levels that need to be maintained and our current levels don't allow for officers to get much time off, overtime is offered first, but if it does not get filled, officers are forced to work, starting with the lowest on the seniority list. We are

working on an initiative to address this issue which includes revamping the forcing procedure so the same officers don't get forced every day they are working. Part of this new initiative would require divisional personnel to work an agreed upon number of shifts in the Patrol Division when staffing levels are low, allowing patrol sergeants to take overtime shifts working as a non-supervisor, and requiring reserve officers to work an agreed upon number of force-able events that junior officers repeatedly get forced to.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Commissioner Cronin asked if there are limits to what reserve officers can do and was advised by Assistant Chief Marr that they don't have the same level of training as full time officers and are used by the department in different ways including traffic control, subpoena serving, background process, grand jury, etc.
- Commissioner Cronin asked what the full complement of reserve officers is for the department and was advised by Chief Aldenberg that we are authorized to have 31 reserve officers and currently have 22.

6. COMMENTS FROM CHIEF ALDENBERG

- John and Eva were re-nominated for a 2-year term, unless protested.
- Will be attending the Chiefs of Police Conference from 10/13 to 10/17.
- WMUR will be working on a statewide story to run in November which will focus on police training. They will be coming to Manchester Police to learn about our Advanced Medical and De-escalation training

7. TENTATIVE DATE OF THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

- Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

8. END OF PUBLIC SESSION

- The Public Session ended at 9:43 a.m.